

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment
DOI- BLM-UT-Y010-2015-0188 EA**

June 2015

Redesign of Sand Flats Campground B

Location: Sand Flats Recreation Area, Grand County, Utah

Applicant/Address: BLM, 82 East Dogwood, Moab, UT 84532

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

INTRODUCTION

The Moab Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management proposes to redesign Campground B in the Sand Flats Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). A fifteen site campground has existed at this location since 1992. Formerly, this campground was on land administered by the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) of the State of Utah and leased by Grand County. In 2014, the BLM acquired this property as part of the Utah Recreational Land Exchange. Now that the property is managed by BLM, the agency proposes to redesign the campground and make improvements to the facilities.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Sand Flats SRMA is a popular recreation destination, as it is home to the Slickrock Trail, and is located two miles from the city of Moab. Most of the users of the Sand Flats SRMA consist of out-of-area tourists who are often interested in camping. There is a need to provide campgrounds in the area; all dispersed camping is forbidden in the Sand Flats SRMA because of the heavy use of the area. The BLM's intention is to improve the campsites located on the land formerly held by SITLA. The Sand Flats Team of county employees had previously constructed the designated sites without benefit of equipment, just to have a sustainable place for people to camp. The BLM would redesign the campsites, improve the camper parking, add an additional toilet and improve the road entrance. This would provide better camping opportunities and safer ingress and egress to the campground.

The proposed action is to improve the already-existing Campground B in the Sand Flats SRMA.

CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLAN

The proposed action described below is in conformance with the 2008 Moab Resource Management Plan (RMP). Campground B is within the Sand Flats SRMA, which is managed as a Destination SRMA (page 93). In REC-41 (page 93), the 2008 RMP states that campground facilities should be provided in the SRMA.

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act mandates multiple use of Public Lands, including recreation use. An objective of BLM's recreation policy is to satisfy recreation demand within allowable use levels in an equitable, safe and enjoyable manner, minimizing adverse resource impacts and user conflicts.

The proposed action specifically implements the Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Recreation Management for BLM Lands in Utah by seeking to repair long-term damage caused by dispersed camping. The proposed action "limits or controls activities through specialized management tools such as designated campsites. . . and (places) limitations on number of users."

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

There are two alternatives: (a) the Proposed Action, to reconstruct the campground with 17-sites and (b) No Action, which is to not construct the additional facilities. The No Action alternative is considered and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts of the proposed action.

PROPOSED ACTION

The BLM would redesign the current campground now that it is located on BLM land. There would be 17 individual sites, two of which would be walk-in sites. An additional toilet would be added to the loop. The parking spurs would be reconfigured to aid traffic flow. The ingress to and egress from the campground would be consolidated into one entrance road, improving traffic patterns onto the paved Sand Flats Road.

NO ACTION

The campground would not be reconstructed. Camping spurs would remain "rough", there would be a separate ingress and egress and there would be only one toilet to serve many campers.

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SETTING

The affected environment of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in Appendix A, the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist. The checklist indicates which resources of concern are either not present in the project area, or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis. Critical Elements of the Human Environment are those elements that are subject to the requirements specified in statute, regulation, or executive order, and must be considered in all EAs (BLM H-1790-1, Appendix 5). Critical Elements of the Human Environment are included in Appendix A. Resources, including Critical Elements, which would be impacted to a level requiring further analysis are described in Chapter 3 and impacts on these resources are analyzed in Chapter 4 below.

Recreation

The Sand Flats SRMA has been a popular recreation destination for many years; it has been utilized by recreationists since the early 1990's. Current visitation exceeds 200,000 visitors per year. Recreation activities in the area include hiking, jeeping, bicycling, and sightseeing. Prior to the 1990's, Sand Flats hosted many dispersed campers. The camping situation got to a point where intervention was required due to lack of toilets and lack of organization. The BLM and Grand County formed a partnership to control camping and other recreational activities. The Sand Flats SRMA is a joint partnership of

BLM and Grand County. Camping is allowed only in campgrounds that are equipped with toilets and other infrastructure.

Prior to the Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act, campgrounds were located on both BLM and SITLA land. BLM campgrounds in the SRMA were designed and constructed by BLM; SITLA campgrounds were created by the Sand Flats Team (Grand County employees). Since the completion of the Land Exchange, all campgrounds are now located on BLM land.

Vegetation

The vegetation in the campground consists of juniper trees and scattered shrubs.

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

PROPOSED ACTION

This section analyzes the impacts of the proposed action to those resources described in the Affected Environment, Chapter 3, above.

Recreation

The redesign and development of Sand Flats Campground B would provide 17 newly designed and developed campsites to accommodate the public. Delineation of camping surfaces would reduce campsite spread and associated vegetation and soils impacts, including blowing dust. The installation of an additional toilet would reduce the health concerns associated with human waste disposal. The ingress and egress roads would be consolidated into one entrance road, with better sight lines from the Sand Flats Road, thus improving traffic safety. The campground would provide sustainable camping in a popular recreation area. The redesign of the campground would improve its functionality as well as improve the camping experience.

Vegetation

Some scattered shrubs would be removed for the new ingress and egress, as well as for the new toilet. Areas that would be closed off to driving because of the campground remodel could be expected to revegetate themselves over time.

NO ACTION

The No Action alternative would not meet the need for the proposed action and would not improve a recreation resource for the traveling public.

Recreation

The current campground would remain "rough", with sites as formerly created by the dispersed camping public. Only one toilet would serve many campers, and the ingress

and egress roads would not be consolidated, leading to an unsafe traffic situation on the fairly busy Sand Flats Road.

Vegetation

Barriers to driving would not be erected, causing more vegetation to be impacted. Those shrubs that would not have to be removed because the new toilet and new entrance would not be constructed would not be impacted.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. The Cumulative Impacts of this project are considered negligible, as the direct impacts of redesigning an already existing campground are considered negligible.

CHAPTER 5 PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Grand County Sand Flats Department	The Sand Flats Team is responsible for day-to-day operations of the Sand Flats SRMA.	Sand Flats has asked for the BLM to redesign and reconfigure Campground B.

During preparation of this EA, the public was notified of the proposed action by posting on the ePlanning website on June 1, 2015. No comments were received as a result of this posting.

BLM Preparers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document
Ann Marie Aubry	Hydrologist	Soils, Wetlands, Air Quality, Floodplains, Water Resources
Bill Stevens	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Socioeconomics, BLM Natural Areas, Environmental Justice
David Pals	Geologist	Wastes, Geology
Pamela Riddle	Wildlife Biologist	T&E Animals, Fish and Wildlife, Migratory Birds, Utah BLM Sensitive Species
Jared Lundell	Archeologist	Cultural, Native American Consultation
Katie Stevens	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Team Lead, Recreation, VRM, ACECs, Wild and Scenic Rivers

Dave Williams	Range Management Specialist	T&E Plants, Livestock Grazing, RHS, Vegetation
Jordan Davis	Range Management Specialist	Invasive Species, Woodlands
Josh Relph	Fuels Specialist	Fire and Fuels
Rebecca Hunt-Foster	Paleontologist	Paleontology

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist

Appendix B: Diagram of the Proposed Redesign of Campground B

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST

Project Title: Redesign of Sand Flats Campground B Campsites

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2015-0 EA

Project Leader: Katie Stevens

DETERMINATION OF STAFF: *(Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)*

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA

The following elements are not present in the Moab Field Office and have been removed from the checklist:

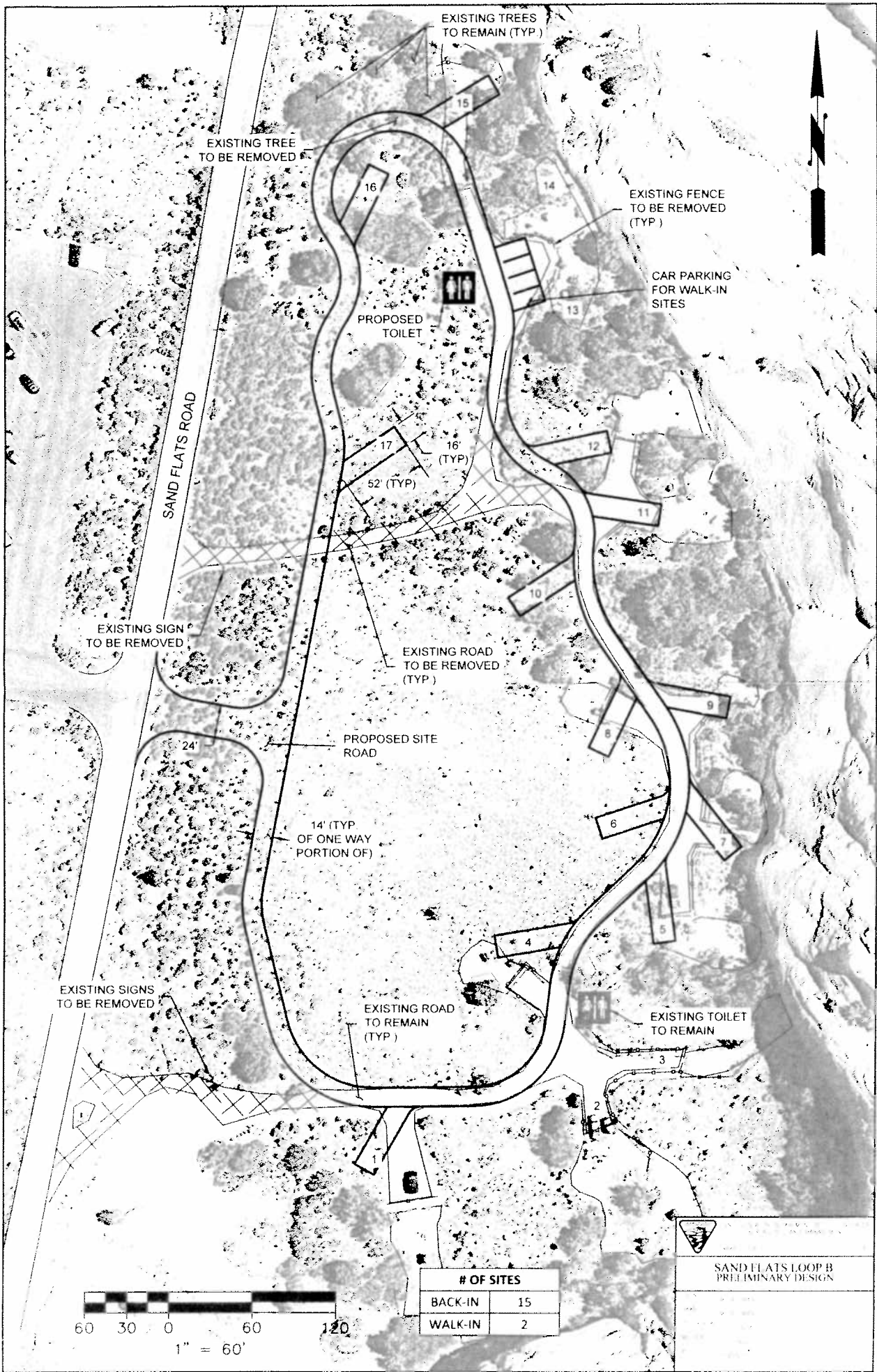
Farmlands (Prime or Unique), Wild Horses and Burros.

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)				
NI	Air Quality Greenhouse Gas Emissions		Ann Marie Aubry	6/2/15
NI	Floodplains		Ann Marie Aubry	6/2/15
NI	Soils	Existing disturbance	Ann Marie Aubry	6/2/15
NI	Water Resources/Quality (drinking/surface/ground)		Ann Marie Aubry	6/2/15
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		Ann Marie Aubry	6/2/15
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	See 2008 RMP	Katie Stevens	6/2/15
PI	Recreation	Would provide a benefit to campers	Katie Stevens	6/2/15
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	See 2008 RMP	Katie Stevens	6/2/15
NI	Visual Resources	Campground already in existence.	Katie Stevens	6/2/15
NP	Wild Lands (BLM Natural Areas)	See 2008 RMP	Bill Stevens	6/2/15
NI	Socio-Economics		Bill Stevens	6/2/15
NP	Wilderness/WSA	See 2008 RMP	Bill Stevens	6/2/15
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	See 2008 RMP	Bill Stevens	6/2/15
NP	Cultural Resources	BLM conducted a literature search and a Class III archaeological inventory of the project area in 1994. The BLM found no properties eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. The BLM, therefore, made a determination of No Historic Properties Affected. Details of these finds are discussed in the Cultural Resource Inventory Report (U-94-BL-0097). The BLM received concurrence from the SHPO in February 1995 under case number 94-0224. The current undertaking is within the footprint of the previous survey and no historic properties were found in that survey. The previous survey was consistent with current BLM inventory standards. The BLM, therefore, makes a determination of No Historic Properties Affected for the current undertaking. The BLM will consult with the Utah SHPO in accordance with the	Jared Lundell	6/2/15

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
		threshold procedures for small projects specified in the Utah BLM/Utah SHPO Statewide Small Projects Programmatic Agreement.		
NP	Native American Religious Concerns	No known sites of religious or cultural significance to Native American tribes are within the project area.	Jared Lundell	6/2/15
NI	Environmental Justice		Bill Stevens	6/2/15
NI	Wastes (hazardous or solid)		David Pals	6/2/15
NI	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species	Proposed activity will not create new footprint on habitat or create new or additional disturbance to wildlife	Pam Riddle	6/3/15
NI	Migratory Birds	Proposed activity will not create new footprint on habitat or create new or additional disturbance to wildlife	Pam Riddle	6/3/15
NI	Utah BLM Sensitive Species	Proposed activity will not create new footprint on habitat or create new or additional disturbance to wildlife	Pam Riddle	6/3/15
NI	Fish and Wildlife Excluding USFW Designated Species	Proposed activity will not create new footprint on habitat or create new or additional disturbance to wildlife	Pam Riddle	6/3/15
NI	Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds	Remaking the campground not likely to change the vegetation that already exists.	Jordan Davis	6/2/15
NP	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species	No habitat	Dave Williams	6/2/15
NP	Livestock Grazing	No livestock grazing	Dave Williams	6/2/15
NI	Rangeland Health Standards		Dave Williams	6/2/15
PI	Vegetation Excluding USFW Designated Species		Dave Williams	6/2/15
NI	Woodland / Forestry	Not changing the character of the campground	Jordan Davis	6/2/15
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	Campground already exists. Impacts to fuels in newly disturbed areas will be minimal and no additional analysis is needed	Josh Relph	6/2/15
NI	Geology / Mineral Resources/Energy Production		David Pals	6/2/15
	Paleontology		Rebecca Hunt-Foster	

FINAL REVIEW:

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	<i>RC Stevens</i>	6/3/15	
Authorized Officer	<i>Josh Relph</i>	6/3/15	



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
DECISION RECORD**

DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2015-0188 EA

FONSI: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment (EA), I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and an environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

DECISION: It is my decision to redesign and reconstruct Sand Flats Campground B as described in the Proposed Action.

RATIONALE: The decision to redesign and reconstruct the campground has been made in consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The action is in conformance with the Moab Resource Area Resource Management Plan, which specifically authorizes a campground in the area.

[Signature]
Field Manager

6/3/15
Date